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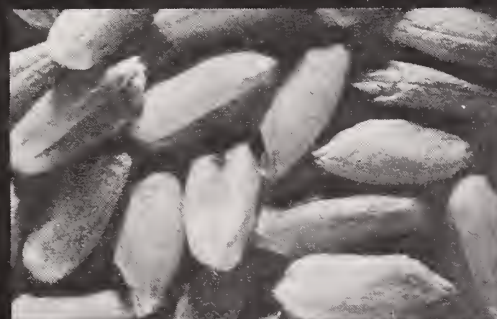
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Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

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Guidelines for Importing Plant Germplasm

Plant scientists occasionally need to import germplasm, such as seeds, cuttings, scions, or tubers, for research purposes. Federal quarantine regulations require that an import permit be obtained from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. The regulations and permit procedure are designed to help prevent the introduction and establishment of exotic plant pathogens and pests, while speeding the germplasm through the necessary entry procedures.

Failure to obtain the necessary permit in advance could delay or possibly result in confiscation and destruction of the germplasm at the port of entry. Unauthorized importation of germplasm could lead to a serious insect pest or disease outbreak. Some of our most destructive diseases are "foreigners" that very likely came in undetected on imported plant materials. Examples include black stem rust of wheat (*Puccinia graminis*), Sorghum downy mildew of sorghum and corn (*Sclerospora sorghi*), and Dutch elm disease (*Ceratomyces ulmi*).

How to apply for a permit

Depending on its entry status, germplasm may be admitted under either a regular permit or a special Departmental permit. Departmental permits are issued for plant materials normally prohibited entry because of high pest risk, but admitted for scientific purposes if stringent safeguard conditions can be maintained.

The person who will control the germplasm after its entry into the United States should apply for the permit. He should write, giving full details, to:

Regulatory Support Staff
Plant Protection and Quarantine Programs
APHIS, USDA
Federal Building
Hyattsville, Md. 20782

The request should be filed at least 30 days before the scientist's trip departure date from the United States or the expected germplasm shipment date.

Each application is evaluated individually, using established quarantine guidelines. USDA'S Agricultural Research Service and State officials may be consulted before permit requests are granted or denied. Factors considered include: (1) type of germplasm, (2) exotic plant diseases known to occur in the country of origin, (3) where and how the germplasm will be used, and (4) what safeguard facilities are available.

The applicant must comply with the conditions specified in the permit. These safeguards, imposed to minimize pest risk, will detail how the material is to be shipped, handled, treated, and used.

Imported germplasm likely to be infected with hard-to-detect virus diseases usually must be grown under APHIS supervision under controlled conditions for a specified period of time after entry. If, after testing including virus indexing, the material is found free of viruses, virus-like agents, and other pathogens, it may be released for experimentation or crop improvement.

Entry procedure

Germplasm should be entered through the Plant Germplasm Quarantine Center in Washington, D.C. This Center has the facilities for inspecting and, if necessary, treating the material. The mailing address is:

Plant Germplasm Quarantine Center
Room 1127, Auditors Building
Washington, D.C. 20250

Special mailing labels are available for germplasm importations. They should be requested when applying for a permit.

Additional information

Occasionally, scientists receive germplasm unsolicited from foreign researchers. In such cases, the Regulatory Support Staff, an agricultural quarantine office (listed under "U.S. Department of Agriculture" in telephone directories), or the Plant Germplasm Quarantine Center in Washington, D.C., should be contacted for handling instructions.

A Federal import permit does not usually authorize movement of germplasm freely between States or even within a State. Additional authorization from the Regulatory Support Staff may be required for interstate or intrastate transport.

Scientists may need to bring a diseased or pest-infested plant specimen into the country. This requires a permit to import live plant pests or pathogens. Application should be made to:

Plant Importation and Technical Support Staff
Plant Protection and Quarantine Programs
APHIS, USDA
Federal Building
Hyattsville, Md. 20782

PA-1110, "How To Move Live Pests, Pathogens, and Disease Vectors of Plants" is available for reference.

Plant quarantines have been violated by scientists who were either unaware of, or careless about, the Federal statutes. Purpose of this bulletin is to alert you to the regulations and seek your cooperation in protecting the Nation's vital agricultural resources. We also want to help you avoid delay or possible loss of your valuable germplasm collection.

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